



Chief Executive of CLCGB appointed Connor Children's Officer

Victoria Jackson, Chief Executive Officer of the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade (CLCGB), has been appointed Children's Ministry Development Officer for Connor Diocese.

MAY 6, 2021

Victoria is a familiar face in the diocese, having supported many diocesan and parish events organised by previous Children's Officer Jill Hamilton.

She is married to Paul, and grew up in Hollywood, Co Down, where she was a member of Hollywood Baptist Church.

A past pupil of Sullivan Upper Grammar School, Victoria has a Degree in Human Nutrition and a Masters in Health Promotion, both from the University of Ulster.

She was appointed Development Officer at the CLCGB in 2014 and became the organisation's Chief Executive Officer in 2019. During her time with the CLCGB, the organisation opened nine new CLCGB groups. Victoria also wrote and introduced a new Scripture course and introduced Junior Leaders' Training for members aged 15–18 so they could go on to be adult leaders.

“Over the years, the organisation has grown and we have done a lot more competitions, events and online activities,” Victoria said. “We now have 1,000 members in Northern Ireland.”

Victoria's faith developed from an early age, and when she finished university, she sensed God calling her to work for him full-time. The job of Development Officer with CLCGB was advertised soon after she graduated.

“God truly does know us better than we know ourselves, He knew that I would love this job and this organisation, that the people in it would become like family to me and that the role would suit me so well,” she said of the CLCGB.

MAY 6, 2021

“We have the most amazing volunteers, who are very dedicated and inspiring to work with. I love working with children all around Northern Ireland and telling them about God, and there are so many opportunities to do that in churches and Brigade groups.”

Victoria said she is looking forward to the move to Connor Diocese. “I am excited about building on the amazing work that Jill has done,” she said. “I am looking forward to being part of the diocesan team and to getting to know the volunteers and leaders and see what they need and go about meeting these needs.”

“Children’s mental health has been impacted over the last year, and we can help parents and leaders to support their children.

“I am excited about the opportunities that opening up from lockdown will bring. Having a blank slate will provide opportunities for change and for doing things differently. It will be good to support churches and help them bring in new volunteers.”

Victoria and Paul are members of Dundonald Elim Church, where Victoria is in the worship team. She loves music, travelling and dogs.

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, said he was ‘delighted’ that Victoria had accepted the invitation to become Connor’s new Children’s Ministry Officer.

“I look forward to having her join the team of staff who serve the parishes of Connor Diocese,” Bishop George said.

MAY 6, 2021

“Victoria is no stranger to the diocese, particularly through her work over the last six years leading the work of the Church Lads’ and Church Girls’ Brigade in the Church of Ireland.

“She brings a wealth of skills and resources to her new role and will be a blessing to those involved in the important ministry of making Jesus Christ known amongst the children of our parishes.”

New digital and radio ad campaign to support Accord’s first online counselling service

- “Accord counsellors are professionally trained in the specialism of couples and relationships online counselling” – Bishop Denis Nulty
- “If you can’t talk to each other, talk to Accord” – new radio advertisement

Yesterday, Bishop Denis Nulty launched Accord’s first online counselling service to support individuals and couples experiencing difficulties in their relationships.

To support this initiative, Accord has commissioned a new digital media and local radio advertising campaign across the country – see list below – to promote its online counselling service to prospective clients.

During May the following advertisement will be broadcast on radio: ‘Accord counsellors can help if your family

MAY 6, 2021

relationships are under stress. For online or in person counselling visit accord.ie If you can't talk to each other, talk to Accord. Supported by Tusla, Child and Family Agency.' A digital advertisement campaign promoting the Accord online service will be promoted on Facebook and Instagram.

Welcoming the new service, Bishop Nulty, President of Accord CLG, said, "For the first time in our near sixty years service, Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG is now operating its specialist counselling services online to those who, for whatever reason, are unable to travel to an Accord centre to access in person counselling.

"All Accord counsellors are professionally trained in the specialism of couples and relationships counselling. Our counsellors providing the new online service have completed additional, comprehensive training accredited by the Association for Counselling and Therapy Online (ACTO) to ensure that the standards of client care and quality of professional service in online counselling match those of Accord CLG's in-person service.

"Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions saw a number of interruptions to many essential services and we know that care for all aspects of marriage and family life simply cannot be put on hold. In launching the new online counselling service we hope to maximise accessibility to individuals and couples experiencing challenges in their relationships, even if they are unable to physically travel to see us," Bishop Nulty said.

MAY 6, 2021

For best results, couples or individuals seeking online counselling with Accord CLG are advised to have in place an uninterrupted, confidential space that has stable broadband, as well as a PC, laptop or iPad/tablet. Couples living in the same household may join their online counselling sessions on a shared device. The new service will also meet the needs of couples who may be living apart and need to join the counselling sessions from their separate locations.

Online counselling appointments can be accommodated every day from 9.30am through to 9.30pm. Those interested in availing of the service should access accord.ie or make contact with Accord CLG's administration team on onlinecounselling@accord.ie.

Conversations about Mission – Helping churches reach out to those experiencing domestic violence

Dublin and Glendalough Council for Mission is holding a number of Conversations about Mission on Zoom, starting on Wednesday May 19.

They would love you to join them.

The conversations will focus on enabling churches to reach out into their communities in a Covid/Post-Covid society. Each month practitioners will speak briefly about their area of expertise and participants will have the opportunity to explore how they can take action in their own contexts.

MAY 6, 2021



Dioceses of
Dublin & Glendalough
Council for Mission

CONVERSATIONS
ABOUT
Mission

when home is not a
SAFE PLACE

Reaching out to those at risk of
domestic violence during Covid.

MAY 19TH | 8PM | ZOOM

Contributors:
JACQUELINE ARMSTRONG
KELLEY BERMINGHAM

To book your place, email:
dgcouncilformission@gmail.com

The first Conversation about Mission, on May 19 at 8pm, will focus on domestic violence: 'When Home is not a Safe Place – Reaching those experiencing domestic Violence during Covid'.

Contributors will be Jacqueline Armstrong, the Mothers' Union's Faith and Policy coordinator, and Kelley Bermingham, the Community Officer of St Patrick's Cathedral.

Jacqueline Armstrong will talk about the All-Ireland Mothers' Union activities in highlighting gender-based violence, and, in particular, domestic abuse. Kelley Bermingham will talk about the work of CritiCall, an initiative to support people emerging from domestic violence during the Covid-19 pandemic.

MAY 6, 2021

Jacqueline and Kelley will also answer questions from participants who seek to understand how they can take action locally.

To join the conversation and book your place, please email dgcouncilformission@gmail.com and you will receive a link to the meeting.

The second Conversation about Mission will take place in June when the Council for Mission will explore 'Hidden Pain – how to reach out to those experiencing grief during Covid–19'

Archdeacon takes part in lighting of NI centenary beacons

In his capacity as Mayor's Chaplain in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, the Archdeacon of Connor, the Ven Dr Stephen McBride, took part in two beacon lighting ceremonies on Monday May 3 to mark the centenary of the opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament.

The Newtownabbey beacon was lit at Macedon Point in Hazelbank Park in Whitehouse and the Antrim beacon was situated at the top of the motte in Antrim Castle. Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of County Antrim, David McCorkell, a parishioner of Broomhedge, read a citation quoting from the speech made by King George V at the opening of Parliament.



Councillor Jim Montgomery, Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; Archdeacon Stephen McBride, Mayor's Chaplain, and Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of County Antrim, David McCorkell at the lighting of the beacons on May 3. Photo: Stephen Davison.

In a speech, the Mayor, Councillor Jim Montgomery, expressed his hopes for the future of Northern Ireland while acknowledging the difficulties of the past.

Archdeacon McBride concluded the proceedings using prayers from the Church of Ireland's liturgical resources for the occasion.

This is the fourth term Archdeacon McBride has served as Mayor's Chaplain, first of all with Paddy Marks, on two occasions with Paul Michael and currently with Jim Montgomery.



The lighting of the beacons in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough to mark the centenary of the opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament. Photo: Stephen Davison.

“My duties include taking the opening devotions at the monthly council meetings and attending formal civic functions,” Archdeacon McBride said. “I have been very fortunate to have been chaplain on four occasions when the Freedom of the Borough has been conferred. The first was RUC, then the RAF, the Royal British Legion and most recently Jonathan Rea MBE, five time Superbike World Champion.

“It has been a great honour to have been chaplain to three Mayors and to have served with them on such prestigious occasions.”

MAY 6, 2021

Opinion - The 100th Anniversary of the establishment of Northern Ireland - David Chillingworth

Bishop David Chillingworth has written in his blog -

Today marks the 100th Anniversary of the establishment of Northern Ireland. Although I was born in Dublin, I grew up in Enniskillen – a beautiful place tarnished by the smoke and mirrors world of discrimination and gerrymander so well captured by Seamus Heaney’s 1975 poem, ‘Whatever you say, say nothing’. And of course Enniskillen is probably best known for the Remembrance Day bombing of 1987.

We did our best to make a contribution in reconciliation until the time came to move on in 2005. Much of my heart remains in Northern Ireland. Our children grew up there. The people are wonderful – warm and kind. They have wonderful turns of phrase which stay with me. We lived through the ups and downs of the Troubles – both the hopes and the awfulness of it all.

The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 was a real moment of hope. It has largely ended the violence but Northern Ireland really isn’t a place at ease with itself. I remember that I misread the significance of the Agreement – telling my congregation that Easter Sunday that it would strengthen the centre and marginalise the extremes. In fact, it did the opposite.

Professor Duncan Morrow has been writing today on his Facebook page. What he writes is the best analysis I have

MAY 6, 2021

read of the situation as we now find it. This is part of what he said:

The peace process and the Good Friday Agreement were by far the closest Northern Ireland came to a second chance.

After years of carnage, Britain and Ireland concluded that hard borders in Ireland were incompatible with a sustainable peace. So we got the opposite: reconciliation, shared government, human rights, North-South and East-West bodies, consent and exclusively peaceful and democratic means. And open borders and self defined citizenship which allowed the water of nationality to find its own level. It has been complicated enough.

The institutions and principles designed in 1998 have tottered between promise and collapse. A new generation escaped the trauma of everyday violence, although real trust has been hard to detect. But there was at least a project until Brexit.

In practice, Brexit was the moment when the British interest in peace in Ireland was subordinated to a determination to leave the European Union.

It was not so much that they were against the peace- on balance they were for it- but the Brexiteers saw NI- even Unionism- as a second order commitment, not in the end essential compared to escape for England from the vice of Brussels.

And so the paradox. A century after partition, a British PM was willing to try anything to sort his 'Irish problem'.

Instrumentalism was back in.

MAY 6, 2021

For Boris, get Brexit done meant removing the 'obstacle' of Northern Ireland, and dealing with the costs later, maybe. But the Irish problem was and is that the Good Friday Agreement – or at least the spirit of reconciliation and tolerance which was its purpose – is destroyed by the hard borders which are the purpose of Brexit. So getting Brexit done meant sidelining all of that.

Unable and unwilling to enforce a border in Ireland, the UK government agreed that the problem should be resolved by controls within its own territory.

And so this time we got the border in the Irish Sea. As we hit 100 years, it is hard, these days, to detect much 'celebration' of the Irish border. Nationalists, not surprisingly, see it as Ireland's greatest historical injustice, something to be mourned and reversed and given no encouragement. But as the consequences of the Brexit deal sinks in, Unionism finds itself in a tail-spin, with no obvious project except the continuous negative refusal of Irish unity.

The story from here is hard to read. The DUP, having supported Brexit now finds itself in a political situation which is simply impossible. The centre ground is growing and that at least is promising. One article today said that, for every vote which the DUP loses to groups to the right of it, it loses three to the Alliance Party.

I heard Dennis Murray, former BBC Northern Ireland Political Correspondent in an interview today about the centenary. He suggested that Northern Ireland has some years left in it because that suits the main players in Britain

MAY 6, 2021

and Ireland. Maybe ... but the pace of change everywhere in Britain and Ireland is quickening by the day.

Bishop David Chillingworth is the former Primus of the Episcopal Church, Scotland.

Media review

Former President of Ireland endorses study that "disproves" Church's objections to homosexuality

IrishCentral

Mary McAleese, the former President of Ireland, is among the signatories of a recently published academic study on the Catholic Church's views on ...

[[] <https://www.irishcentral.com/news/mary-mcaleese-church-homosexuality>]

New DUP leader should be prepared to walk away from Stormont over NI Protocol, says Orange leader

Irish News

THE new leader of the DUP should be prepared to walk away from Stormont in the fight against the Northern Ireland Protocol, a senior Orangeman has said. Rev Mervyn Gibson, grand secretary of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, said the Brexit clause should be removed by whatever means necessary. Speaking to the News Letter, Rev Gibson gave some views on the DUP leadership contest.

[[] <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2021/05/04/news/new-dup-leader-should-be-prepared-to-walk-away-from-stormont-over-ni-protocol-2309485/?mc>]

MAY 6, 2021

NI 100: 'Peace in Northern Ireland is credit to people'

BBC News

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56966270>]

See also -

[[] <http://www.rte.ie/news/2021/0503/1213418-northern-ireland-100/>]

NI 100: QUB opens series of public talks to mark partition

BBC News

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56941161>]

Nuns take issue with comments regarding baptisms at

Bessborough

The Irish Times

Every child born in Bessborough mother and baby home in Cork was properly baptised within the rites of the Catholic Church, according to the order which ran the home.

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/nuns-take-issue-with-comments-regarding-baptisms-at-bessborough-1.4555019>]

Education spending on NI's disadvantaged pupils 'ineffective'

BBC News

The Department of Education (DE) cannot demonstrate that almost £1bn of funding has improved the education of disadvantaged children. That is according to a critical report from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO). It said the educational gap between poorer and more affluent pupils increased as they got older.

MAY 6, 2021

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56984871>]

UK supermarkets warn Brazil over Amazon land bill

BBC News

Nearly 40 UK food businesses have threatened to stop sourcing products from Brazil over proposed land reforms. An open letter from the group calls on Brazil's legislature to reject a bill which could legalise the private occupation of public land. The letter said the proposal could accelerate deforestation in the Amazon.

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56989711>]



Pointers for prayer

Mighty God, in whom we know the power of redemption, you stand among us in the shadows of our time.

As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life, uphold us with knowledge of the final morning when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son, we will share in his resurrection, redeemed and restored to the fullness of life and forever freed to be your people.

Amen.

Living God,
long ago, faithful women
proclaimed the good news
of Jesus' resurrection,
and the world was changed forever.
Teach us to keep faith with them,
that our witness may be as bold,
our love as deep,
and our faith as true. Amen.

Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.
We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love,
and peace,
to the glory of your name. Amen.

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his
resurrection,
teaching them to love all people as neighbours.
As his disciples in this age,
we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe
in which we are privileged to live
and our neighbours with whom we share it....
Petitions... concluding with:
Open our hearts to your power moving
around us and between us and within us,
until your glory is revealed in our love of both friend and
enemy,

MAY 6, 2021

in communities transformed by justice and compassion,
and in the healing of all that is broken. Amen.

Holy God,
you have called us to follow in the way of your risen Son,
and to care for those who are our companions,
not only with words of comfort, but with acts of love.
Seeking to be true friends of all,
we offer our prayers on behalf of the church and the world.
Petitions... concluding with:
Guide us in the path of discipleship,
so that, as you have blessed us,
we may be a blessing for others,
bringing the promise of the kingdom near
by our words and deeds. Amen.

Speaking to the Soul

So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup.
1 Corinthians 11:27-28 NLT

If you are employed then you probably have the delight of an annual appraisal. The intention is to stand back from how things are going in order to acknowledge what went badly and what went well, and to reflect on how things could be strengthened for the year ahead. Conducted well, appraisals can be a great blessing and I have always been grateful for the ones that I have had. Here Paul is suggesting that we need to conduct a self-appraisal on a regular basis before

MAY 6, 2021

we meet together to celebrate Christ's death for us on the cross.

The Corinthian church had clearly made a huge mess of their services. When they had a meal together to celebrate Jesus' death some of them ate so much that there was nothing left for others. It makes their services sound like a riot! Paul concluded that their services actually did more harm than good. That's a very severe conclusion and although I have been to many different Christian services over the years, I have never had to be as harsh as that! For Paul, this special service was so important that everyone needed to prepare carefully for it, and crucial to that preparation was self-examination.

When we examine ourselves we need to be ruthlessly honest. This is a very serious business. No-one would want to be found guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. As we look hard at our lives we are not looking for perfection, because we will all fail that test. What the Lord wants to see in us as our honesty. As we shine the light on our lives we need to acknowledge our failings and seek his forgiveness and renewal as we rededicate our lives to him. We come with empty hands so that he may fill us again with his blessings.

QUESTION

When and how do you examine yourself before God?

PRAYER

MAY 6, 2021

Dear Lord, help me to be totally honest with you as I look at my life. I seek your forgiveness and ask you to fill me afresh with the gift of your Holy Spirit. Amen

